UNITED
NATIONS

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Economic and Social Council

Distr.
GENERAL

E/1995/89
9 June 1995

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Substantive session of 1995
Geneva, 26 June-28 July 1995
Item 4 of the provisional agenda*

OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

Annual report of the United Nations Development Programme to the Economic and Social Council

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I. PURPOSE

1. The present report is submitted in compliance with paragraph 7 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1994/33 of 28 July 1994, in which the Council requested the United Nations development funds and programmes, through their Executive Boards, to include in their annual reports to the Council, which should have a common structure: (a) a section outlining measures taken in the implementation of the provisions of the triennial policy review of operational activities (General Assembly resolutions 44/211 and 47/199); and (b) a section on the activities and measures undertaken within the designated theme for the high-level meeting of the operational activities segment. By its decision 1994/293, the Council decided that the high-level meeting of the operational activities segment of its substantive session of 1995 would consider as a principal theme the implementation of the programme of action adopted by the International Conference on Population and Development. Other themes, including the outcome of the World Summit on Social Development, could also be considered by the high-level meeting.

2. The present document reflects the reporting format agreed upon among the secretariats of the Executive Boards of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the World Food Programme (WFP).

II. FOLLOW-UP TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTIONS 44/211 AND 47/199

3. In the course of 1994, UNDP continued to build on progress made in the previous year, reported on in document DP/1994/22, on various policy, programme and administrative measures introduced to implement provisions of resolution 47/199 relevant to the organization, namely with respect to the country strategy note (CSN), the harmonization of programming cycles, the programme approach, national execution, decentralization, the resident coordinator system, common premises and common training. UNDP also continued to collaborate with its United Nations partner organizations bilaterally and collectively through the Joint Consultative Group on Policy (JCGP), the Consultative Committee on Programme and Operational Questions (CCPOQ) and the International Labour Organization (ILO) International Training Centre in Turin to enhance the general implementation of the resolution.

Country strategy note

4. Based on information collected by UNDP at the end of 1994, the majority of programme countries do consider the CSN process as useful for priority setting, aid coordination and resource mobilization. At least 70 countries have initiated the preparation of CSNs and, in the course of the year, UNDP headquarters reviewed about 20 draft CSNs. It is anticipated that the CSNs will form an integral part of the preparation of the next series of programming for United Nations funds and programmes. In this context, the Executive Board, at its second regular session 1995, considered and approved UNDP and UNFPA

cooperation frameworks with Turkey and Indonesia that were based on the CSNs for those countries. UNDP continues to support the preparation of CSNs through the resident coordinator system and through national and regional workshops organized in conjunction with the ILO Turin Centre.

5. Among the non-participating countries, only seven have formally served notice that they will not undertake the CSN. The main reasons given include deference to the principle that national priority setting should remain a sovereign responsibility, that the relatively modest and declining levels of United Nations development system resource flows do not justify the preparation of a CSN and the contention that the national development planning processes of some countries do themselves provide adequate basis for programming by the United Nations development system. The rest of the programme countries remain undecided on the CSN and, in a number of instances, the difficult socio-political circumstances in the country preclude its preparation (Angola, Somalia, Liberia).

6. UNDP remains convinced of the substantial benefits of the CSN for both the programme countries and the donor community arising from extensive country-based consultations on national development priorities, integration of external cooperation into national development programmes and coordinated external cooperation programmes. For this reason, UNDP has taken note of and has supported the efforts of the United Nations development system under the leadership of the resident coordinator to develop coordinated responses in countries that may not formally be undertaking the CSN. The experiences in Pakistan in the preparation of the "Open Letter to the Government" and in Bangladesh in the preparation of the document "A Fork in the Path" are interesting and instructive cases in point. Both are based on known priorities of the Governments, both entailed extensive national-level consultations and both reflect a systems perception of how the United Nations can best provide coordinated support to national development efforts. Notwithstanding paragraph 9 of resolution 47/199 and in the interest of enhancing much-needed coherence and coordination of external assistance, UNDP will continue to support such country-level initiatives.

Harmonization of programming cycles

7. The process of harmonizing programming cycles of the United Nations funds and programmes is being undertaken under the auspices of the JCGP Subgroup on Harmonization and, within this group, UNDP has the responsibility for coordinating the effort in the Asia and Pacific countries.

8. Considerable progress has been made in harmonizing the programming cycles of UNDP, UNICEF and UNFPA in various programme countries around national planning cycles where feasible. In the past year, the United Nations funds and programmes have amply demonstrated their willingness to shorten or lengthen current cycles in order to achieve harmonization. Indications are that the targeted 80 per cent harmonization by 1996 will be achieved and possibly exceeded. However, it will not be possible to achieve harmonization in all countries owing to civil strife and other causes, unrelated to the United Nations programming process.

Programme approach

9. UNDP distributed its "Guidelines for Programme Support Document" (PSD) and its companion "Programme Support Implementation Arrangements" (PSIA) in November 1993 and February 1994 respectively. The PSD/PSIA comprise the operational instrument of the programme approach, outlining the nature of the national programme being supported, the rationale for UNDP support, capacity-building targets and the UNDP financial parameters.

10. A review of the mid-term reviews of fifth cycle programmes undertaken in 1994 shows that the programme approach has been applied mainly to new programming opportunities rather than to ongoing cooperative efforts. As many as 75 PSDs have so far been approved. Progress remains hampered by reduced programming opportunities as a result of the high levels of resource commitments to stand-alone projects carried over from the fourth cycle and the decline - even cut-backs - in new programmable resources.

11. To enhance the understanding and adoption of the programme approach, UNDP has prepared a training module, including a training video, and has contributed to the work on monitoring and evaluation guidelines on the programme approach through CCPOQ. UNDP is also collaborating with the ILO Turin Centre in the preparation of a programme approach training module for the United Nations specialized agencies in Geneva. In April 1994, UNDP participated in a mission led by the United Nations to China and India on country experiences with the application of the programme approach and national execution.

National execution

12. Following CCPOQ agreement on a common interpretation by the United Nations development system of the term "national execution" in March 1993, UNDP commenced work on reviewing its present guidelines on this modality. Revised guidelines, which simplify the adoption of the modality of national execution, without compromising accountability or increasing the administrative workload on the programme countries, were completed in June 1994 after extensive consultations at the country and headquarters levels.

13. Mid-term reviews of fifth cycle programmes undertaken in 1994 indicate that the modality of national execution remains widely accepted as essential for the development of national capacities to own, manage and sustain the development process. It is also cited for the possibilities it creates for long-term collaborative relationships between national institutions and external technical institutions through cooperating and implementation arrangements. In 1994, 53 per cent (or $545 million) of UNDP programme expenditure was through national execution, up from 34 per cent (or $406 million) in 1993. UNDP continues to support the use of this modality through, inter alia, its TSS-2 provisions, which facilitate substantive accountability and technical backstopping by the specialized agencies during implementation.

Decentralization

14. With offices in over 130 countries and 85 per cent of its staff located in the country offices, the greatest strength of UNDP lies in the delivery capacity

of its network. Accordingly, UNDP has taken measures to decentralize operational authority to the country offices in order to enhance responsiveness to country needs and to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the country offices in resource utilization and programme delivery. The financial level of approval delegated to resident representatives has been raised to $1 million. Authority for procurement of goods and services has been increased to $100,000.

15. UNDP has also created regional service centres in Asia and Africa to provide financial management and accounting support to country offices.

Resident coordinator system

16. UNDP attaches particular importance to the service function of the resident coordinator system and to the need to strengthen it. Accordingly, UNDP has made significant commitments in staff, financial and other resources to the function, which has resulted in closer UNDP collaboration with its partner agencies through the JCGP and CCPOQ and with the United Nations Secretariat, both for humanitarian affairs and for peace-keeping and governance.

17. UNDP proposals to strengthen the resident coordinator system adopted at the high-level JCGP meeting in Bangladesh in February 1994, covered such aspects as broadening the resident coordinator selection process to include candidates from JCGP agencies, funding and staffing the coordination function, training country coordination teams (see paras. 22-23) and coordinating information. At least 40 per cent of current UNDP resident representatives have served in United Nations agencies other than UNDP in their careers, while six resident coordinators have been recruited directly from JCGP agencies.

18. In October 1994, the Administrator created the Office of United Nations System Support and Services (OUNS) as the focal point for resident coordinator matters. After due consultations, OUNS has developed and distributed a comprehensive management plan that identifies short- and long-term activities for strengthening the resident coordinator system. UNDP has also created a special $2 million fund from the Special Programme Resources (SPR) to support country-level coordination activities. This facility became operational in October 1994. Resident coordinators were also encouraged to tap other resources, such as the Development Support Services, on a continuing basis to support coordination initiatives. Other far-reaching proposals for funding and strengthening the resident coordinator system in the post-fifth cycle period have been presented for the consideration by the Executive Board in document DP/1995/15.

19. In addition, UNDP has been active in the CCPOQ Working Group on the Resident Coordinator System, which has reviewed and updated the terms of reference for resident coordinators. They have been approved by CCPOQ at its fifth session in February 1995. In late 1994, UNDP initiated a study to develop hitherto non-existent performance appraisal systems for the resident coordinator function, the results of which will be shared through CCPOQ.

Common premises

20. At the JCGP high-level meeting in Bangladesh in February 1994, agreement was reached to implement the United Nations system common premises (UNSCP) strategy in the programme countries. The strategy was based on a study by the JCGP Subgroup on Common Premises and Services (SGCPS/JCGP), which demonstrated the significant cost and other advantages for use of consolidated country-level premises and facilities for the JCGP agencies. The strategy is being implemented by the Common Premises and Services Programme Unit, located in UNDP and jointly funded by UNDP and UNICEF.

21. At its meeting in November 1994, SGCPS approved United Nations system common premises for Barbados, Bolivia, Brazil, Laos, Senegal and Trinidad and Tobago. The common premises in these countries will be constructed under the ownership/leasehold modality, the legal instruments for which were prepared by the United Nations Legal Office and approved at the high-level meeting in Bangladesh in 1994.

Common training

22. In the course of 1994, UNDP continued to contribute to curriculum development and provide staff and financial resources to the ILO International Training Centre, Turin, for the training of United Nations country coordination teams. So far, about 70 teams have been trained at the Centre and, in a number of cases, the training has been followed with in-country training for other members of the country coordination teams.

23. In September 1994, UNDP organized a pilot briefing for 19 newly appointed resident coordinators, which was designed to prepare them for representational roles and provide country-specific programme and managerial information. A UNDP/CCPOQ-sponsored advanced course for experienced resident coordinators will be held at the ILO Turin Centre in May 1995. UNDP also continues to support the Disaster Management Training Programme (DMTP) in conjunction with the United Nations Department of Humanitarian Affairs. In 1994, DMTP conducted 23 regional and national workshops and provided training materials requested by institutions in a number of countries. Other collaborative training initiatives undertaken in various programme countries have covered such topics as HIV/AIDS and the implementation of provisions of resolution 47/199, especially the preparation of CSNs.

III. FOLLOW-UP TO THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT

24. ICPD provided the world community with an opportunity to re-think old approaches to population and development and to explore new concepts: the fundamental role of women in the development process; reproductive health; the centrality of the individual in issues relating to reproduction; and the linkages between population, development and the environment. The challenges posed by the ICPD Programme of Action require collaborative action by the United Nations development system. UNDP plays a key role therein, both in terms of coordination and substance.

25. UNDP has developed an action plan for implementing the ICPD Programme of Action whose main components are: review of policies and guidelines to bring them in line with the ICPD Programme of Action; training on the messages emerging from the Conference; active participation in the ICPD Task Force, its Working Groups and other international ICPD follow-up activities; and joint inter-agency initiatives. In addition, UNDP has formulated a strategy paper that integrates the population factor into its sustainable human development framework. At the country level, the resident coordinator system has been accepted as the principal means of coordinating United Nations system implementation of the ICPD recommendations. This places a major responsibility on the resident coordinators, virtually all of whom are currently UNDP resident representatives, as well as on the representatives of UNFPA, who will be expected to serve as a key resource to all their other United Nations system colleagues in determining how best to integrate population concerns into the country's development frameworks.

26. UNDP has been facilitating the wide dissemination of the ICPD Programme of Action at the country level and, in conjunction with UNFPA, encouraging governments to develop national ICPD implementation strategies and to continue their national commissions on population and development. The ICPD Task Force is currently developing tools to facilitate the role of the resident coordinator in this respect. For example, guidance on implementing the basic education components of the ICPD, Education for All and the World Summit on Social Development (WSSD) is being drafted for resident coordinators.

27. New and existing coordination tools for the United Nations system are being utilized to help implement the ICPD Programme of Action. For example, resident coordinators are advocating that CSNs be used to unite the programmes of the United Nations system around the goals and objectives of the ICPD. Consultative Group meetings and round-table meetings also present propitious opportunities for coordination and resource mobilization both within and beyond the United Nations system. Other more informal working groups, clustered around main components of the ICPD, are being established to insure unified United Nations system implementation of the Programme of Action at the country level.

28. These country groupings will shortly be reinforced by a consolidated United Nations system approach to multiconference follow-up currently being developed by UNDP and the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development. Through a series of inter-agency task forces, it will focus the system on the implementation of the goals and priority objectives of the main United Nations conferences held over the last five years.

29. Resident coordinators are being called upon to demonstrate commitment and leadership in implementing the far-reaching ideals embodied in ICPD, with due respect for national customs, traditions and policies. This important advocacy role at the country level requires the support, guidance and participation of all members of the United Nations system.

30. Although little funding is available for additional programming at this late stage of the fifth cycle, UNDP has recognized the critical importance of the ICPD agenda in complementing its development programmes. Fortunately, small changes in emphases to take better account of ICPD recommendations are often

possible with little or no additional inputs. For example, national poverty assessments and planning exercises can be expanded, at little extra cost, to emphasize population dynamics and the linkages between population, development and the environment.

31. Several interregional and global initiatives deserve mention in the context of UNDP follow-up to ICPD. The Joint Programme: Strengthening National Capacities to Reduce Maternal Deaths and Disabilities Programme, brings together the respective expertise of UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, the World Health Organization (WHO), the World Bank and regional development banks, international financing institutions, NGOs, universities and research centres around one of the central topics of ICPD. The programme aims at assisting countries through capacity-building: country needs assessments; action plans at the national, provincial and district levels; consensus-building; technical support for effective implementation; monitoring and evaluation. This programme evolved as the operational mechanism to stimulate and support the development and implementation of effective and sustainable programmes at the national level. Its focus represents the foundation on which the rest of the reproductive health superstructure must be built. As such, its activities form an integral part of the follow-up to ICPD.

32. The ICPD Programme of Action places HIV/AIDS squarely within the framework of reproductive health. UNDP is an active partner in the Joint and Co-sponsored United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS. The programme draws on the strengths of its six co-sponsors (UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA, WHO, UNESCO and the World Bank) to: prevent the transmission of HIV; reduce the suffering caused by HIV and AIDS; make the broader environment conducive to prevention and supportive of people with HIV/AIDS; and cushion the harsh impact of the epidemic on individuals, communities and societies. An important component of the programme is the mainstreaming of HIV/AIDS considerations into the co-sponsors' plans, programmes and activities at the country, interregional and global levels.

IV. FOLLOW-UP TO THE WORLD SUMMIT ON SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

33. The World Summit on Social Development concluded on 13 March 1995 with the plenary adoption of the Declaration and Programme of Action outlining, inter alia, 10 commitments on people-centred sustainable development; the eradication of absolute poverty; the promotion of full employment and sustainable livelihoods; and social integration. It established the primacy of national responsibility for social development and the imperative that policies and programmes be nationally owned and driven, and invited the United Nations development system to strengthen and adjust its programmes or strategies, as appropriate, to take into account the follow-up to the Summit (see Declaration and Programme of Action, chap. V, para. 96 (b)). Significantly, UNDP was called upon to continue to undertake efforts to support the implementation of the social development programmes, taking into account specific needs of the countries with economies in transition (para. 97 (b)) and organize United Nations system efforts towards capacity-building at the local, national and regional levels, and support the coordinated implementation of social development programmes through its network of field offices (para. 99 (a)).

34. In the course of 1994, UNDP supported numerous country and regional activities related to the preparation for WSSD through SPR and regular programmes. In anticipation of a significant lead role in supporting countries implementing the outcome of the Summit, UNDP established a WSSD follow-up strategy group, in February 1995, which will work with country offices and country-level partners to assist them in developing specific strategies and programmes for implementing the WSSD Programme of Action.

35. WSSD commitments closely parallel the UNDP core mission and strategy as outlined in Initiatives for change (DP/1994/39), submitted to the Executive Board at its annual session 1994 and formalized in Board decision 1994/14. The central WSSD goal, "people-centred sustainable development" (para. 26 (a)), encapsulates the concept of sustainable human development (SHD). In addition, WSSD called for a strengthened framework of international cooperation (Commitment 10), a closer integration of United Nations system activities in pursuit of social development (Commitment 8) and a greater concentration of resources on social development goals and priorities (Commitment 9). These reflect the UNDP goals outlined in Initiatives for change. Also, three of the four UNDP focus areas serve as key commitments of WSSD: eradication of poverty (Commitment 2); job creation and sustainable livelihoods (Commitment 3); and gender equality and equity (Commitment 5). The fourth, environmental protection and regeneration, while not a specific commitment, was identified as one of the principles of the framework for action (para. 26).

36. In short, there is a high degree of consistency between the directions and strategic priorities outlined in Initiatives for change and the WSSD Programme of Action. UNDP is in a strong position to respond quickly and concretely to the challenges of the WSSD follow-up. Elements considered for a UNDP follow-up strategy include:

(a) Offer of immediate support to countries in integrating WSSD and related conference agreements into their long-term development plans and frameworks, particularly strategies for the eradication of poverty;

(b) Dialogue among United Nations specialized agencies and other international development cooperation partners on the integration of follow-up strategies. Use will be made of WSSD follow-up as a rallying point for improved aid coordination and cooperation;

(c) A possible capacity development window for WSSD follow-up, comparable to Capacity 21, to give clear effect to the UNDP mandate in this regard (para. 99 (a)). National partnership facilities will be a key element of this strategy, facilitating the mobilization of funds for national capacity-building and the coordination of activities in this area.

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OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

Annual report of the United Nations Children's Fund to the Economic and Social Council

SUMMARY

The present report is submitted pursuant to paragraph 29 of the annex to General Assembly resolution 48/162 of 20 December 1993, paragraph 7 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1994/33 of 28 July 1994 and Economic and Social Council decision 1994/293 of 28 July 1994.

Chapter I outlines measures taken in the implementation of the triennial policy review of operational activities and chapter II discusses activities and measures undertaken within the designated theme of the Economic and Social Council's high-level meeting of the operational activities segment. In 1995, this focuses on implementation of the Programme of Action adopted by the International Conference on Population and Development. Chapter III relates to the follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development.

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I. MEASURES TAKEN IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROVISIONS OF THE TRIENNIAL POLICY REVIEW OF OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES

A. Introduction

1. The Executive Director believes that General Assembly resolution 47/199 of 22 December 1992 represents a landmark in promoting inter-agency collaboration and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) has placed a high priority on implementing its provisions, both collectively with its partners and directly within the organization itself.

2. There are a large number of significant elements to the resolution. However, one hallmark of the resolution is the emphasis on establishing common goals and strategies (such as through the country strategy note) around which the United Nations system can mobilize. Another hallmark is the emphasis on strengthening the role of the Government in coordination, emphasizing the need for United Nations assistance to be linked with that of external donors and, of course, national resources. Finally, the resolution also emphasizes moving the United Nations system towards greater flexibility in the mechanisms for providing assistance through its emphasis on the programme approach, national execution and adaptation of rules and procedures.

3. In short, resolution 47/199 has come to represent a conceptual shift whereby inter-agency collaboration moves from a limited focus on administrative control towards an effort to create strong alliances for action within the United Nations system.

4. The present report was prepared prior to the drafting of the Secretary-General's triennial report on these issues. In that report, there will be a detailed enumeration of the specific issues and achievements by UNICEF as well as by all the United Nations system. Therefore, the present report will seek to focus more on the broad UNICEF perspective on those issues.

5. The following sections summarize UNICEF follow-up to the key parts of resolution 47/199 that are most relevant to UNICEF operations. They first discuss the effort to establish common goals and strategies (such as through the country strategy note) and then address programme issues (such as the harmonization of cycles, the resident coordinator system, field committees, evaluation and monitoring, programming procedures and programme terminology), followed by operational issues (such as common premises, simplification and harmonization of procedures, a common manual, management audit systems, decentralization and delegation of authority and training).

B. Common goals and strategies

6. For several years, as Chairman of the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) Committee on Operational Activities, the Deputy Executive Director, Programmes, proposed that there should be a common United Nations strategy document. Three years ago, UNICEF proposed to its partners in ACC that the United Nations system should establish country strategy notes which, in countries so choosing, would serve as a mechanism for drawing together common goals and strategies in the United Nations system. This proposal was ultimately approved unanimously by ACC and subsequently considered by the General Assembly and made an important part of resolution 47/199.

7. UNICEF has pursued very actively the implementation of this provision both through advocacy and support at the headquarters level and through a very active role at the country level. To begin with, formal guidance was given to UNICEF field staff underlining the high priority the Executive Director attaches to supporting this initiative. UNICEF field and headquarters staff also participated in the training seminar on this issue held in Turin, Italy. Above all, support to the development of country strategy notes has been discussed on a regular basis by senior UNICEF staff with all field representatives.

8. As a result, there has been a highly significant involvement in providing support to Governments and to the resident coordinator, often involving major commitments of staff time and analytical resources. For child-related issues, it has been the experience of UNICEF that Governments frequently choose to draw upon their national programmes of action for implementing the commitments of the World Summit for Children. This illustrates a highly useful interaction between a major summit and the key elements that help coordinate and focus United Nations efforts at the country level.

9. Final reporting on progress in the preparation of country strategy notes will be provided by the Secretary-General in his report to the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly. At the time of this writing, UNICEF is aware of some 64 countries that have chosen to prepare a country strategy note. The first completed country strategy note was transmitted to the United Nations by the UNICEF regional director, who was acting as resident coordinator at the time. In addition to the three country strategy notes that have been completed, UNICEF is also aware of some 13 countries where there is a draft country strategy note and 16 more where the draft is being formulated and is likely to be finalized soon.

10. The recent agreements reached at the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) and the World Summit for Social Development and the probable conclusions from the Fourth World Conference on Women are likely to help serve as guideposts for future United Nations efforts at the country level. It will be important that every effort be made to support Governments in their efforts to implement these conclusions and to maximize their value as a coordinating tool.

11. Likewise, there are many other efforts under way to help define common goals and strategies. For example, in Bangladesh, UNICEF was requested to be the lead organization in helping to prepare a common United Nations "vision" document, entitled "A fork in the path", and elaborated in close cooperation with the Government. Such efforts might be high-priority areas for replication in a wider range of countries. Likewise, mechanisms such as round tables and consultative groups offer special opportunities to help define common goals and strategies among United Nations and other partners with the Government.

12. In short, it would be highly advantageous to make more systematic and comprehensive use of the type of country-specific opportunities that are available to define more clearly common goals and strategies as a basis for stronger inter-agency collaboration.

C. Harmonization of programme cycles

13. The Joint Consultative Group on Policy (JCGP) Subgroup on Harmonization, under the chairmanship of UNICEF, constantly reviewed the status of harmonization of programme cycles as reported by the designated geographic focal points (the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) for Asia, UNICEF for Africa and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) for Latin America and the Caribbean and the Middle East and North Africa) and helped to coordinate the

agencies where cycles appear different. Working groups, comprising the geographic sections/bureaux of each agency, have convened to analyse the responses to the letter on harmonization of programme cycles addressed by the executive heads of the three member organizations with programme cycles (UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF) and to discuss efforts aimed at coordinating and expediting the agreement of the preferred timing for harmonization. As a result, three different lists of countries have emerged for each region: (a) list A, showing countries that already have achieved harmonization of programme cycles; (b) list B, of countries likely to achieve harmonization with some adjustment; and (c) list C, essentially of emergency-type countries that are unlikely to achieve harmonization in the near future.

14. In reviewing the situation of harmonization of programme cycles, the subgroup has provided guidance and support to the working groups. In the case of harmonization in Africa, a memorandum, co-signed by the UNFPA and UNICEF Deputy Executive Directors for Programmes and the UNDP Assistant Administrator, Africa Bureau, was issued in May 1994 to request UNDP resident representatives, UNFPA country directors and UNICEF representatives in Africa to make a joint statement reflecting an agreement reached by the three organizations on a preferred timing for harmonization in accordance with the existing operational guidelines.

15. As stated in the report of the Secretary-General on progress on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 47/199 (E/1994/64), which was submitted to the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 1994, "there is now a plan in place on the harmonization of programming cycles for all countries except where local conditions are not conducive to such an approach. It will be implemented with the start of the new programme cycle" (para. 21). The latest status of the harmonization of programme cycles is given in the table below; 80 per cent of the countries have either already harmonized their programme cycles or will do so upon the expiration of the current country programmes.

Status of harmonization of programme cycles by region

Region	List A (Harmonization achieved)	List B (Harmonization likely)	List C (Harmonization not likely)
Africa	10	22	12
Americas and the Caribbean	4	17	2
Asia	11	8	4
Middle East and North Africa (or Arab Bureau)	2	8	2
Total	27 (26%)	55 (54%)	20 (20%)

D. The resident coordinator system: widening the pool

16. The selection process for resident coordinators/resident representatives was agreed upon by JCGP at its high-level meeting in Dhaka, Bangladesh, in February 1994. JCGP executive heads are committed to widening the pool of qualified development professionals eligible for appointment as resident coordinators/resident representatives, together with increased transparency in the selection process. The JCGP executive heads agreed that the members of JCGP will assist UNDP to define country-specific requirements for the resident coordinator/resident representative vacancies. Candidates will be drawn primarily from the human resources of the JCGP organizations themselves. However, candidates also may be recommended and drawn from sources such as the United Nations system, member Governments, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the private sector.

17. JCGP executive heads further agreed to make their recommendations based on country-specific requirements and the existing criteria reflecting system-wide discussions, and with special reference to areas emphasized in resolution 47/199.

18. The Consultative Committee on Programme and Operational Questions also completed its review and updating of the resident coordinator guidelines to bring them in line with the current state of operational activities and the spirit of resolution 47/199. UNICEF, as one of the organizations with a strong and effective field presence, played an instrumental role in updating the guidelines.

E. Field committees

19. UNICEF has strongly advocated that through the resident coordinator system, field committees be established to help guide the coordination of operational activities in the respective countries. These could prove very useful in helping to promote the common goals and strategies, as well as in helping to examine how programmes and projects relate to these objectives. The committees, when functioning well, have theme groups led by organizations' staff who are technically and operationally best suited to do so.

F. Evaluation and monitoring

20. The conceptual paper, "Harmonization of monitoring and evaluation", was completed in June 1994 by the Working Group on Evaluation and Monitoring and reviewed in early September by the Subgroup on Harmonization. Incorporating the comments and observations made by the subgroup, a concept paper on "Harmonization of monitoring and evaluation" has now been produced.

21. It was found that a substantial degree of harmony already exists between the evaluation systems of JCGP members. The review revealed few, if any, substantive differences of consequence. The underlying principles, while not totally identical, are by and large indistinguishable in substance. The differences are mainly differences of terminology, detail, emphasis or institutional framework. As a start, the work has now commenced with the harmonization of product formats to ensure a common understanding of concepts and to facilitate the sharing of information.

22. The next phase of the exercise will include:

(a) Project evaluation policies, procedures and products;

(b) Programme evaluation policies, concepts, terminology and products;

(c) Monitoring products for both projects and country programmes.

23. The harmonization process has also facilitated the identification of specific and tangible measures that will help to actuate cooperation between the agencies. Such measures will include:

(a) The establishment of a system that will give each agency computerized access to the evaluation databases of the other agencies;

(b) The establishment of a joint consultant roster;

(c) The holding of joint training in evaluation techniques;

(d) The holding of joint evaluation missions.

G. Programming procedures

24. The issue of harmonizing and simplifying programming processes is being examined by a newly established working group, working under the JCGP Subgroup on Harmonization chaired by UNICEF. In principle, the group reviews the possibility of undertaking common situation analysis exercises in countries that have harmonized their programming cycles and have agreed on the preparation of a country strategy note. The ultimate aim of the subgroup will be to recommend the process and content of the proposed common situation analysis. As a first step, the working group will review and compare the current programming process carried out by JCGP agencies and ensure that senior staff with responsibilities for programming in their organizations are involved in the work of the working group.

H. Programme terminology

25. A report on "Harmonization of key terminologies in the United Nations development activities", prepared by the JCGP Subgroup on Harmonization in compliance with recent resolutions/decisions adopted by the United Nations General Assembly, was distributed in January 1994, for information, to all United Nations resident coordinators, country directors and representatives of UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, the International Fund for Agricultural Development and the World Food Programme.

26. The importance of reaching a common understanding of key programme-related terms was solicited by resolution 47/199, and had previously been highlighted by the JCGP Subgroup on Harmonization in 1992 in response to General Assembly resolution 44/211 of 22 December 1989.

I. Common premises

27. To date, 30 UNICEF offices share common premises with other United Nations organizations. To accelerate this trend further, UNDP and UNICEF, within the context of JCGP, have determined the financial and organizational implications of expanding the number of common premises. Some 45 country-based offices have been identified for possible move into common premises over the next biennium, with others to follow as and when it becomes feasible for contractual, financial and organizational reasons.

28. A subgroup of JCGP has undertaken considerable work in the area of analysing the viability of establishing common premises and in the actual setting up of a number of such premises throughout the developing countries. A Joint Inspection Unit report on the United Nations system common premises and services in the field has made a detailed analysis of the current status (see JIU/REP/94/8).

J. Simplification and harmonization of procedures

29. Internally, UNICEF continues to simplify and, where appropriate, eliminate rules and procedures that do not advance the effectiveness of programming. Furthermore, within the context of JCGP, UNICEF has examined the prospects of preparing a system-wide manual as proposed in resolution 47/199. It has been determined collectively that for important reasons, including divergence of mandate, modus operandi etc., a comprehensive compendium of common rules and procedures within the United Nations system would not be cost-effective or productive at this stage. However, the JCGP organizations could already work together to create the building blocks of a common document that would reduce the burden imposed on Governments and fulfil the purpose of a "common manual".

K. Common manual

30. The JCGP general meeting has indicated repeatedly that although the compilation of a comprehensive compendium of common rules and procedures within the United Nations system would not be cost-effective or productive at this stage, there were, however, specific areas where JCGP organizations could already work together to create the building blocks of a common document that would reduce the burden imposed upon Governments and fulfil the purpose of a manual.

31. The overall coordination of the process of developing a body of common procedures is being carried out by the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development of the United Nations Secretariat in line with its responsibility to report on the progress on the implementation of resolution 47/199.

L. Management audit systems

32. JCGP internal audit services are now meeting periodically with the objective of promoting harmonization of management audit systems among the members of JCGP. The first meeting took place in Rome, following the twenty-fifth meeting of the representatives of internal audit services of United Nations organizations and multilateral financial institutions in May 1994.

33. Consensus was reached that the objective of the internal audit services is to assist each organization in the effective discharge of its responsibilities. Management auditing furnishes its respective agencies with analyses, appraisals and recommendations concerning the activities reviewed, specifically with respect to the adequacy and effectiveness of the organization's system of internal control and the quality of performance.

34. The working group on management audit systems has covered the following areas of work during the period:

(a) Re-emphasis of audit standards;

(b) Exchange of information of computer-assisted audit techniques;

(c) Use of contractors to perform internal audits. The experiences of UNDP and UNFPA were discussed, and it was found that the use of commercial contractors could be a means of enhancing audit coverage and frequency;

(d) Aid accountability. The harmonization of procedures among agencies was seen as an important factor for enhancing government capacities, thus enabling them to discharge their functions and responsibilities effectively;

(e) Plan for undertaking joint audits of programmes and projects. While the value of such undertakings was recognized, it was felt that the matter required further discussion and thought;

(f) Harmonization of auditor training.

35. Together with the representatives of other United Nations organizations and multilateral financial institutions, the working group discussed the advantages and disadvantages of developing a common audit manual. A broad consensus was reached that it was neither practical nor feasible given the diversity of entity profiles and portfolios. However, it was agreed to exchange audit manuals so that the inherent diversity due to the operating environment could be used positively to promote harmonization of audit among them.

M. Decentralization and delegation of programming and authority

36. The UNICEF record in decentralization and delegation of authority remains the strongest in the United Nations system. All country programmes are negotiated, researched and prepared at the country level, with the effective authority for the entire programming cycle firmly in the hands of the country office and the recipient Government. Once a country programme recommendation has been approved by the Executive Board, the front-line authority for the implementation of the approved programme is firmly in the hands of the country office and the recipient Government.

37. Along with this delegated authority comes a strong degree of accountability for results and proper management. Country offices are accountable for meeting the goals and programme targets that have been established with the recipient Governments. They are equally responsible for the corresponding need to ensure that effective advocacy and mobilization are undertaken to guarantee popular participation in programmes and national commitment.

N. Training

38. The Training and Staff Development Section, Division of Personnel, is currently involved in a number of activities with other United Nations agencies and is an active member of the Consultative Committee on Administrative Questions (CCAQ) Subcommittee on Training and the JCGP Subgroup on Personnel and Training.

39. Within the context of the JCGP Subgroup on Personnel and Training, two activities deserve mention: completion of a package on orientation to the United Nations for all new staff; and completion of an HIV/AILS "Train the trainer" package for United Nations staff, also available in Spanish and French. This was a UNICEF-led initiative and is a good example of inter-agency collaboration at the implementation level. The subgroup also has been supportive of the Turin-based workshops on management of field coordination, with individual agencies providing substantive, technical and financial support to the programme.

40. The CCAQ Subcommittee on Training has had ongoing discussions on management development and management training. UNICEF is an active party to these discussions, which will result in more systematic sharing of the best management training practices of the various agencies. The Subcommittee has also undertaken a training module on sexual harassment for staff, with the participation of JCGP members.

41. UNICEF and the United Nations are completing a joint module on critical incident stress management for use by staff in the system. UNICEF has taken the lead on this, building on the work done in the Eastern and Southern Africa regions. The UNICEF safe motherhood training package will be one of the main sources of materials for the work of the Steering Committee of the Joint Programme for Strengthening National Capacity to Reduce Maternal Deaths and Disabilities.

42. UNICEF is also an active participant in the joint training of field teams in support of the implementation of resolution 47/199, being carried out at the International Labour Organization Training Centre in Turin.

II. FOLLOW-UP TO THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT

43. At its 1995 substantive session, beginning at the end of June, the Economic and Social Council will be discussing the follow-up to ICPD as the principal theme for the high-level meeting of the operational activities segment. In its resolution 1994/33 of 28 July 1994, the Council requested that the funds and programmes devote a section of their annual report to the Council to their activities related to this theme. Therefore, while the current report should be seen in the context of previous reporting to the Executive Board on the UNICEF role in population-related issues, the present chapter is limited to involvement in ICPD follow-up activities.

44. Clearly, ICPD has the potential for becoming a landmark in the development field. In particular, if actively followed up, ICPD may come to have "ratified" a major shift in development thinking on population issues that has been under way for several years. Broadly speaking, this shift emphasizes the role of providing for basic health needs, basic education (especially for girls) and women's empowerment as major elements in the population field. This emphasis is very close to the approach that has been taken by UNICEF, as underlined by the Executive Board, for a number of years.

45. Therefore, ICPD and its follow-up processes can contribute greatly to UNICEF efforts as defined by its core mandate, and UNICEF has a special responsibility to be an active and supportive participant in the follow-up process. Indeed, in some areas, such as ICPD support to the World Summit for Children goals, the ICPD process provides links to some of the highest priorities of UNICEF.

46. That process began in mid-December 1994 when, on behalf of the Secretary-General and at the request of the Administrator of UNDP, the Executive Director of UNFPA convened the first meeting of the Inter-Agency Task Force on the implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action. UNICEF actively participated in the meeting and strongly supported the approach taken, i.e., to focus on specific practical actions where the United Nations system could play a supportive and constructive role, particularly at the country level. It was decided to set up working groups in the following areas:

(a) Support to data systems at the national level, especially in the areas of infant, child and maternal mortality. This working group will be chaired by UNICEF and will be meeting shortly;

(b) Basic education (with special attention to girls' and women's education);

(c) Advocacy efforts in relation to social development issues;

(d) Support to practical actions by Governments for improving the empowerment and status of women.

47. Most of these groups will have work under way by the time the Council meets, and the Secretary-General will be providing an update on their progress. While it is still early in the inter-agency process, UNICEF believes these efforts have begun on a very positive basis.

48. The follow-up to ICPD is also being coordinated through ACC, which reviewed the follow-up process at the executive-head level in late February. Special emphasis is being placed on country-level coordination through the resident coordinator system and through use of key coordination tools, such as the country strategy note. Particular attention is also being paid to linkages with the NGO community at the country level.

49. The Executive Director has already given guidance to UNICEF field offices and senior staff to play an active and constructive role in the follow-up process. This guidance commends to the attention of UNICEF staff issues such as child survival and health, women's health and safe motherhood, education, empowerment of women and the girl child, children and youth, urban issues and male responsibility.

50. Progress in UNICEF efforts at the headquarters and field levels to support ICPD follow-up will be reviewed regularly both within UNICEF by senior management and collectively by senior management with UNICEF partners.

III. FOLLOW-UP TO THE WORLD SUMMIT FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

51. A separate report on UNICEF participation in the follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development (E/ICEF/1995/19) will be considered by the Executive Board at its annual session.

UNITED NATIONS **E**

Economic and Social Council

Distr.
GENERAL

E/1995/90/Add.1
9 June 1995

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Substantive session of 1995
Geneva, 26 June-28 July 1995
Item 4 of the provisional agenda*

OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

Annual report of the United Nations Children's Fund to the Economic and Social Council

Addendum

UNICEF follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development

SUMMARY

Chapter I outlines the key elements of the Social Summit most relevant to UNICEF. Chapter II provides a general view to UNICEF assistance in the implementation of the Declaration and Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development.

* E/1995/100.

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INTRODUCTION

1. The Executive Director has previously provided the Executive Board with updates on UNICEF support to the preparatory process for the World Summit for Social Development (WSSD), including the report on UNICEF and WSSD (E/ICEF/1994/L.8) submitted to the Executive Board at its 1994 annual session. The present document was prepared in response to Executive Board decision 1994/R.3/9 (E/ICEF/1994/13), in which the Executive Board decided to include an agenda item on follow-up to WSSD, held in Copenhagen, Denmark, from 6 to 12 March 1995, for discussion at the present session.

2. At the time of writing, the Secretary-General is in the process of reviewing arrangements within the United Nations system for follow-up to the Social Summit. A meeting of senior officials on the subject is planned for early June 1995, during which conclusions are likely to be reached on organizing work and assigning responsibilities. In addition, during the coordination segment of its annual session starting in late June 1995, the Economic and Social Council will be reviewing coordinated arrangements for follow-up to the results of major international conferences.

3. As decisions unfold regarding structures and responsibilities, the Executive Board will be provided with additional information and specific proposals for UNICEF participation in the implementation of the Declaration and Programme of Action adopted at the Social Summit (A/CONF.166/L.3).

I. KEY ELEMENTS OF THE WORLD SUMMIT FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT MOST RELEVANT TO UNICEF

4. United Nations conferences often make their most important impact by changing concepts and approaches. WSSD was the first international effort after the cold war to address the full range of issues related to meeting basic human needs. Therefore, the Social Summit offered the unique opportunity to bring together the "social services" and "income" sides of poverty issues. While the United Nations system has many consensus goals for the "social services" side of poverty issues (e.g., the goals of the World Summit for Children and the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD)), there is still the need to forge a more specific consensus around income-related issues (e.g., access to credit for small farmers, income-generating opportunities for women and support to the informal sector). The WSSD process can help to better define objectives for the income-related issues and then help to ensure that the income and social services dimensions are brought together in a mutually supportive anti-poverty package.

5. In addition to their ultimate contribution to development priorities, the WSSD Declaration and Programme of Action also contain a number of important elements directly relevant to the work of UNICEF.

6. First, commitment 6 of the Declaration states, "We commit ourselves to promoting and attaining the goals of universal and equitable access to quality education, the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health and the access of all to primary health care ..." (A/CONF.166/L.3/Add.2, paragraph 2). The Declaration goes on to commit Governments to "formulate and strengthen timebound national strategies for the eradication of illiteracy and universalization of basic education, which includes early childhood education, primary education ..." (A/CONF.166/L.3/Add.2, paragraph 2 (a)). It then states Government commitment to "ensure that children, particularly girls, enjoy their rights and promote the exercise of those rights by making education, adequate nutrition and health care accessible to them, consistent with the Convention on the Rights of the Child and recognizing the rights, duties and responsibilities of parents and other persons legally responsible for children" (A/CONF.166/L.3/Add.2, paragraph 2 (c)).

7. The Declaration goes on to state that Governments will "seek to attain maternal and child health objectives, especially the objectives of reducing child and maternal mortality of the 1990 World Summit for Children, the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development" (A/CONF.166/L.3/Add.2), paragraph 2 (p)).

8. The above-mentioned commitments from the Declaration are dealt with at greater length in the Programme of Action (A/CONF.166/L.3/Add.3-7). In particular, the goals of the World Summit for Children and of ICPD are given strong support. There was special endorsement of the goals for universal access to basic education and primary education (paragraph 36 (a)); reduction of mortality rates for infants and children under five years of age (paragraph 36 (c)); a reduction in maternal mortality (paragraph 36 (d)); a reduction of severe and moderate malnutrition in children under five years of age (paragraph 36 (f)), as well as access to safe drinking water and proper sanitation for all (paragraph 36 (l)) (A/CONF.166/L.3/Add.4).

9. In addition to the issues of health, education, nutrition and water and sanitation, the Declaration and Programme of Action also contain a number of other important provisions directly related to children. For example, the Declaration expresses strong support for meeting the needs of the girl child (A/CONF.166/L.3/Add.1, commitment 5, paragraph (f)). It also contains a major commitment to accelerating economic, social and human resource development in Africa and the least developed countries (A/CONF.166/L.3/Add.1, commitment 7), as well as a strong commitment to ensuring that structural adjustment programmes include social development goals (A/CONF.166/L.3/Add.1, commitment 8). Likewise, in the Programme of Action, there is strong support for promoting and protecting the rights of the child, particularly the girl child, and encouraging ratification and implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The Programme of Action also includes support for improving the situation of children in especially difficult circumstances and preventing exploitative child labour.

10. In addition to the provisions related to children, the chapter on the eradication of poverty calls for efforts to develop national eradication plans, giving special attention to improving access to productive resources and infrastructure (A/CONF.166/L.3/Add.4). For example, for rural poverty, measures such as land reform, improved land tenure security, improved access to water, credit, extension services and access to market are encouraged. For urban poverty, measures such as promoting small-scale entrepreneurs, infrastructure investment and special measures for the homeless are encouraged. In many of these areas, particular attention to the needs of women is emphasized.

11. Beyond the provisions on substantive development issues, there are also important provisions on financing the objectives and on the implementation process. For example, in the chapter on implementation and follow-up, the section on mobilization of financial resources states that the implementation of WSSD will require "agreeing on a mutual commitment between interested developed and developing country partners to allocate, on average, 20 per cent of ODA [official development assistance] and 20 per cent of the national budget, respectively, to basic social programmes" (A/CONF.166/L.3/Add.7, paragraph 88 (c)).

12. Support for the 20/20 initiative may well come to represent an historic breakthrougn – it is the first time that the international community has undertaken to support a floor of financial assistance aimed at basic social services. It also is accompanied by important provisions in support of the target of 0.7 per cent of gross national product to be devoted to ODA, as well as new support for debt relief efforts. In short, the financing provisions represent a well-balanced effort to increase support for ODA as well as to strengthen and reprioritize support to the social sectors.

13. In terms of implementation, the Programme of Action calls for the formulation of national strategies, evaluations and reviews that, inter alia, include time-bound goals and targets for reducing poverty and eradicating extreme poverty. There are also provisions for the strong participation of civil society, including community organizations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). At the international level, the Programme of Action supports a comprehensive approach to the implementation of the objectives of recent United Nations conferences and gives special attention to the role of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council for intergovernmental action. Within the United Nations system, all relevant organizations are invited to take the conclusions of the Social Summit into account in their "activities, programmes and medium-term strategies". In addition, "Relevant governing bodies should review their policies, programmes, budgets and activities in this regard" (A/CONF.166/L.3/Add.7, paragraph 96 (b)). The Secretary-General is requested to ensure effective coordination of the implementation process, and coordination at the country level should make use of the resident coordinator system.

II. THE NEXT STEPS

14. As mentioned in paragraph 2 above, the Secretary-General will begin the implementation process at the inter-agency level with a meeting of the senior officials in early June 1995. The Economic and Social Council also will have the opportunity to discuss the overall implementation process for United Nations conferences in late June. The Executive Director has begun discussions with the organization's United Nations partners in preparation for these processes, although at the time of writing (less than one month after WSSD), those discussions are still in a very preliminary phase. The Executive Board will be provided with an oral update at the present session.

15. The provisions of WSSD related to support for implementation of the goals of the World Summit for Children represent an important opportunity for UNICEF to help strengthen ongoing governmental, inter-agency and NGO processes now well under way. UNICEF also can look forward to similar support from the WSSD process for the goals of ICPD and other related conferences. Likewise, support for issues such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child, improving the situation of children in especially difficult circumstances and preventing exploitative child labour is extremely important.

16. However, perhaps the most important opportunity offered by the Social Summit for the above-mentioned issues is the opportunity to see them placed in a broader context, where they can be linked to other related issues. For example, the health, education, nutrition and related efforts under way can now be linked to efforts to address the "income" side of poverty issues in order to create a more comprehensive and mutually strengthening anti-poverty "package" for action at national, regional and international levels.

17. In summary:

(a) The Executive Director is committed to ensuring that UNICEF plays an active and supportive role in the overall United Nations system follow-up process. Clearly, field-level action needs to be a special area of focus;

(b) As proposed by the Secretary-General, the WSSD processes should be seen as part of a continuum that relates closely to the implementation processes under way for the World Summit for Children, the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, ICPD, etc.;

(c) For UNICEF, this continuum offers opportunities to help strengthen and accelerate the implementation process under way for the World Summit for Children goals. The work of UNICEF in the implementation of the goals and commitments of the World Summit for Children thus forms a direct part of the implementation of the commitments of WSSD. In addition, the broad agenda of WSSD follow-up can help to mobilize a wide range of action on poverty reduction, within which progress for children can be placed. Through its inter-agency participation and advocacy, UNICEF can help to link the previously approved goals for basic services to the new goals related to the income side of poverty. WSSD also offers an especially unique opportunity to create an overall "anti-poverty initiative";

(d) The Executive Board will receive regular updates and will be consulted on UNICEF involvement in the follow-up process.